

Side

Brown

This is a great week for music with top notch shows practically every night featuring a diverse array of sounds. Saturday, guitarist and instrumentalist extraordinaire, **David Lindley** performing with percussionist **Hani Naser** headlines a concert at TLA featuring another interesting guitarist **Adrian Legg** and the quirky folk duo **Aztec Two Step**.

Lindley is best known for his guitar and violin work with Jackson Browne, but before and after that, he has always been a musician who explored all kinds of musical forms and sounds on all kinds of instruments, starting with his first group Kaleidoscope, one of the most esoteric rock bands ever on up to his latest album of Madagascar music with guitarist Henry Kaiser, *A World Out of Time* (Shanachie). That album -- well worth getting -- finds Lindsay and Kaiser playing with several Madagascar musicians on both traditional and contemporary songs, culminating in a delightfully crazy version of "I Fought the Law."

Lindsay's latest project explores Middle Eastern sounds. Hani Nassar, a Jordanian-American lawyer plays the *tombek*, a goblet-shaped drum, along with other hand drums, and Lindley plays a bunch of guitar-related instruments, including Hawaiian lap guitars, an electric oud and the *saz*, but never a standard guitar. In typical Lindley style, he mixes everything up, including such songs as Stephen Foster's "Hard Times Come Again No More," Warren Zevon's "Play It All Night Long" and the Cajun "Les Bon Temps Rouler." Always entertaining, Lindsay is sure to provide a one-of-a-kind night of music that won't be quickly forgotten.

Sunday there will be more International music at the Cherry Tree Music Co-op at St. Mary's Church on the Penn campus with the Canadian-based **Ad Vielle Que Pourra** who play something rarely heard -- French music. The group uses all kinds of instruments including the diatonic accordion, bouzouki, fiddle, electric and acoustic guitars, mandola, mandocello, recorder, bass, flemish pipes (bagpipe) and the *vielle*, or "wheel fiddle," a hurdy gurdy strapped to the chest.

The band's members hail from France, Canada and Algeria. Their music is apparently boundless. The songs on their album *Come What May* (Green Linnet) range from stirring ballads such as "Kanaouen An Dud A Vor", to polkas to renaissance music to jazz. The sounds are entrancing and often beautiful beyond description.

The group's members are all classically trained, and though their music is termed traditional, their songs are primarily original with lyrics based on 18th and 15th Century texts. Prepare to be amazed and have your notion of what music can be expanded, especially if they perform "Tu Nous Les Kas-Ebarh Toi," a traditional Breton dance that suddenly evolves into modern jazz.

Friday, Boston R and B shouter, **Barrance Whitfield**, who with his terrific band the Savages have created some of the most powerful rock 'n' roll (with an emphasis on the "roll") collaborates with singer-songwriter **Tom Russell** on a project titled *Hillbilly Voodoo*, which is also the name of their new album on East Side Digital. This may seem like a strange pairing since Whitfield is akin to a modern day Little Richard and Russell is a classic American songwriter who has worked and written with such artists as Dave Alvin, Nanci Griffith, Peter Case and Ian Tyson to name a few. His songs have been either performed or recorded by Johnny Cash, Katy Moffat and Springsteen. Both performers are easily deserving of more acclaim. However the pairing works on performances of both covers and originals. The covers

provide an excellent idea of where Whitfield and Russell are coming from. Dylan's "Blind Willie McTell," Lucinda Williams, "Just Wanna See You So Bad," Van Morrison's "Cleaning Windows," Jesse Winchester's "Mississippi You're On My Mind," and Peter Case's reworking of a Lightnin' Hopkins tune, "Ice Water" are among the tunes. The songs are rearranged in all sorts of styles from hard rock to reggae, but always with taste.

More important, they're performed with soul and have that major ingredient to good music -- fun -- which easily translates to the listener. If *Hillbilly Voodoo* is an indication, this should be a show to remember and easily worth the trek to Ambler.

Thursday, one of the best contemporary bluegrass groups **Laurie Lewis and Grant Street** play the Tin Angel. Lewis is a championship fiddler and a terrific spirited singer whose natural vocals would make you think she was raised in Kentucky instead of Berkeley, California. The group mixes bluegrass standards and originals written by Laurie, such as the excellent "Don't Get to Close" with songs by other contemporary songwriters.

Lewis' top notch fiddle playing seems effortless, and she is matched by the mandolin of Tom Rozum. Making things more enticing are the superb harmonies by the rest of the group.

Opening for the **Low Road** Friday at the Tin Angel, are **Knots and Crosses**, a folk rock band that has a quite worthwhile album *Curve of the Earth* on their own Crosssongs label. The group has been paying dues in Boston since 1987, performing original material by the three primary members, singer/guitarist Carol Noonan, singer/keyboard player/guitarist Alan Williams and guitarist Rick Harris. On the album (and sometimes in person) they are joined by bassist Greg Porter and drummer Ben Wittman.

Noonan sings most of the leads with a commanding rich voice. One of her best vocals is on the traditional ballad, "How Can I Live at the Top of a Mountain," which starts off a cappella on the first verse, with a droning keyboard providing a mist-like ambiance on the remainder of the song. The song slips right into "Dark Cloud," which features one of Noonan's most vibrant vocals on a standout song.

The group's arrangements are an important part of their sound, usually starting with a no frills acoustic guitar and subtly building to a majestic band sound, which at times is reminiscent of the best of Richard and Linda Thompson.

Their best songs such as "Adore," "Say a Prayer" and "Cold Linoleum" are devoid of clichés and instantly grabbing.

Making her first Philadelphia appearance in eons is **Buffy Sainte-Marie** who returned to recording last year after a lay-off of well over a decade with *Coincidence and Likely Stories* (Chrysalis). The album showed that Sainte-Marie who once played the traditional Native American instrument the mouth-bow and was famous for her quavering throaty vibrato which she sometimes used to extremes has kept up with modern musical innovations, often writing her songs not on the guitar, but a computer.

Many of her new songs have a downright pop sound, but even when Sainte-Mary was singing traditional ballads and original blues such as "Codeine," she also turned out pop. One of her earliest songs "Until It's Time For You To Go" was a huge hit for Elvis.

Though many of her new songs would most likely alienate her early folk fans, Sainte-Marie was always something of a musical maverick and though not all her recent material makes it, she still can sing with a startling intensity

(minus the vibrato) and is capable of not only powerful music but provoking thoughts as well.

Now if everything else mentioned so far in this column is too folky, intellectual or highbrow, by all means check out **Southern Culture On The Skids** Saturday at Khyber Pass with **Go To Blazes** and **Poppy**. S.C.O.T.S. are an insane twangy trio who use a rockabilly framework to comment on the side of Southern society you don't hear too much about. Led by singer/guitarist Rick Miller, S.C.O.T.S.' latest album *For Lovers Only* (Safe House) includes such songs as "Biscuit Eater," "The Man That Wrestles the Bear," and most psychotically "Clyde's Lament" about an eight-fingered factory worker in addition to their classic, "Nashville Toupee."

Miller uses all types of hillbilly mannerisms to get his various points across and backs it up with wonderful reverby guitar leads. In fact many of his leads are hysterical as his songs. With any luck, they'll do "Skunk," a Rufus Thomas inspired funky dance tune about a skunk under the house.